

## The Next Step: Strategies for Filling the Gaps in Services For People with Acquired Brain Injuries In Kentucky

### **Values**

One key to developing services is to identify the values that serve as the foundation for action. The Planning Project Advisory Group assisted in detailing these, which are listed below.

- People with brain injuries deserve respect and are valued members of their homes and communities.
- Services support, rather than supplant, the efforts of people with brain injuries, their families, and their loved ones to remain in their own homes and communities.
- People who use services direct their own care to the greatest extent possible.
- People with brain injuries have choices.
- Services enable people who use them to be as independent and productive as possible.
- Services are provided in the least restrictive environments.
- Services are accessible, available, and effective.

### **Strategies for the Refinement and Development of Services for People with Acquired Brain Injuries in Kentucky**

The following strategies for refining and developing services for people with brain injuries in Kentucky have been identified from the evidence in this report. This report will serve as the Action Plan for the Brain Injury Services Unit which will seek the cooperation and investment of key agencies and community members to implement these strategies.

1. Maximize the ability of people with Acquired Brain Injuries, their families and their loved ones to plan for and support themselves in their own homes and communities.

#### **Suggested Actions:**

- Improve patient education about the effects of acquired brain injuries and the services available to help cope with those effects
- Provide a centralized information and referral source for people seeking information about brain injury or services
- Facilitate workshops for families about financial planning
- Facilitate workshops for families about legal issues, specifically guardianship, advance directives, and the legal system

2. Maximize the use of existing programs and resources available to persons with disabilities.

Suggested Actions:

- Increase the number of case managers statewide who have expertise in the field of acquired brain injury
- Educate case managers about services available to people with disabilities, including brain injuries
- Provide a resource guide to case managers, advocates, and potential referral sources
- Work to identify and amend regulations that may prevent or inhibit access to programs by people who have brain injuries
- Promote participation of people with brain injuries in the advocacy efforts of other groups supporting persons with disabilities

3. Partner with existing programs and providers to increase their capacity and expertise to meet the needs of people with brain injuries.

Suggested Actions:

- Facilitate the provision of easily accessible consultation to providers who are now serving people with brain injuries. Develop a cadre of consultants or program specialists who can assist providers in working with specific individuals.
- Identify and support the efforts of programs serving people with disabilities to become more accessible to persons with brain injuries
- Advocate for required training about brain injuries for professionals and for staff of publicly funded programs serving people with disabilities. Assist in the development and provision of such training.

4. Focus on the prevention of brain injuries

Suggested Actions:

- Partner with and support existing prevention programs like Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center, Safe Kids Coalition, and the Brain Injury Association of Kentucky
- Seek funding for prevention activities
- Seek legislation that may help reduce the incidence of brain injuries in Kentucky
- Focus on the prevention of brain injuries among teenagers

5. Divert existing funds to allow for provision of needed services

Suggested Actions:

- Increase the number of case managers statewide who have expertise in the field of acquired brain injury
- Increase the availability of long-term community residential services for adults with brain injuries.
- Create a continuum of care that is sensitive to the needs of some individuals with brain injuries to move between programs of varying levels of restrictiveness

6. Plan for the future

Suggested Actions:

- Further assess the availability of in-home supports for people with brain injuries and their families, and the long-term availability of those supports, especially respite care.
- Improve the mechanisms for collecting data about the prevalence of persons with brain injuries who use existing publicly funded programs
- Determine when the greatest number of people with elderly caregivers are likely to need publicly funded services
- Determine the number of children with brain injuries currently receiving services who will continue to need publicly funded services as adults
- Improve data collection about the incidence and prevalence of brain injuries in Kentucky
- Educate legislators about the needs of people with brain injuries and their family members

Questions about Kentucky's Action Plan may be directed to:

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